
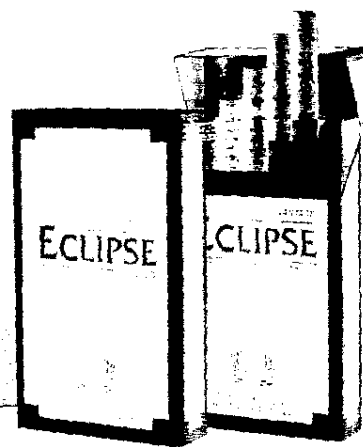


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BY
JAMES
BRADYCOL. JOHN
BOURGEOIS

After leaving the Marine Band, "I'll be a guest artist at Loyola University in New Orleans [his alma mater]," said Colonel Bourgeois, "so it's not really retirement. I also write, transcribe and arrange music, and I'll be guest-conducting." The colonel is divorced and has two sons. "One is an attorney who has given me two wonderful grandchildren," he said. "And my younger son is an artist, and I have a granddog by him—a pit bull named Lunch Box." For his last concert, held at DAR Constitution Hall, "we'll open with the full band onstage," said Bourgeois. "I'll conduct several numbers, then Tim Foley directs. Then I conduct three marches and a Sousa suite. Then Tim does Stephen Foster songs, and I do Wagner's *Lohengrin*. 'Semper Fidelis' by Sousa is my swan song, and I hand over the baton to Tim, and he conducts 'The Stars and Stripes Forever' in honor of the band's birthday. And then it's over." As an old Marine, like John Bourgeois' choice for a "swan song"—the Marine Corps motto: *Semper Fidelis... Always Faithful.*

THIS THURSDAY evening at a concert in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Marine Band, known as "The President's Own," celebrates its 198th birthday, and a Marine colonel named John R. Bourgeois will lead the band for the very last time before handing the baton to his successor, Maj. Tim Foley. (The gold-tipped baton was a gift to John Philip Sousa, the band's 17th director, in 1892.)

Colonel Bourgeois, the 25th director in the Marine Band's history, has played (his instrument is the French horn) or directed for every President from Eisenhower on, as well as for two former Chief Executives: Hoover and Truman. "There are mixed emotions, of course," he said. "I've been doing this for such a long time." Conducting for the U.S. President brings you in touch with a range of famous folk. "I've played for the future emperor and empress of Japan, for Queen Elizabeth, the chancellor of Germany or several of them, several presidents of France, for Yeltsin, Gorbachev, even for Mr. Khrushchev. We also traveled to Yugoslavia and played for Marshal Tito."

The mission of the Marine Band is unique: to provide music for Presidents. While the director of the band reports to both the Marine Commandant and the President, the President takes precedence. Though, as John Bourgeois remarks diplomatically, "I report to the President, but I do not, I assure you, ignore the Commandant."

Now 61, the colonel enlisted in 1956 and, already a trained musician, joined the band two years later. "We audition very much as

Personal:

Born Aug. 31, 1934, in Gibson, La. Divorced. Two sons: John, 32; and Alexander, 30. Two grandchildren: Sophie, 4; and John, 10 months.

Career Highlights:

Joined U.S. Marine Corps, 1956; joined U.S. Marine Band as French horn player, 1958; became Marine Band director, 1979.

Marches:

Has composed and arranged numerous marches to mark special events or to dedicate buildings and monuments. Notable compositions include "The Willard," 1986; and "Gridiron Centennial," 1992.

a symphony orchestra does," he explained. The band hired its first women in 1972. "It's the best thing that could have happened to the band, both musically and in every other way," he said.

Of the Presidents he has known, Colonel Bourgeois said Jimmy Carter was the most knowledgeable about music. "He told me he listened to classical music even at the [Naval] Academy. He enjoyed Wagner, especially *Tristan*. Nixon, of course, was a pianist and once surprised a Gridiron Club dinner by sitting down at the piano and playing. It was Nixon who took our small band to

He'll lead the historic U.S.

Marine Band for the last time on July 11. Meet

Col. John R. Bourgeois, successor to John

Philip Sousa and music-

Yugoslavia. After we played, he came back to thank every one of the 17 musicians. Ford loved to dance. And Betty F had been a dancer. How close does a band get to the First up to them," he said brought the guest of meet us, and we ap. At a dinner after I George Bush said, miss most about be is the Marine Band

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